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Afghanistan: Resisting Sovietization

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A Research Paper

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December 1984*

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [] Office
of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, with a
contribution by [] Office of Soviet
Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. Comments and queries are welcome
and may be directed to the Chief, South Asia
Division, NESAI []

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**Afghanistan:
Resisting Sovietization**

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Summary

*Information available
as of 14 November 1984
was used in this report.*

The Soviet program to transform Afghanistan into a reliable Communist client state thus far appears to have had no impact. Lack of security prevents Communist workers from trying to develop regime programs in more than two-thirds of the country. In areas where there is a regime presence, Sovietization measures have failed to develop significant support for the Afghan Government:

- The Kabul regime has bought only temporary loyalties by bribery.
- Soviet and Afghan media fail to indoctrinate Afghans because of their cynicism, ignorance, and illiteracy.
- The Afghan education system barely functions and is widely distrusted.
- Afghans educated in the USSR often are antagonized rather than indoctrinated. Many returnees cannot obtain appropriate or attractive positions to spread regime influence.

Long-term obstacles to Sovietization include the Afghans' history of resistance to foreign domination and to control by any central government, as well as distrust of government schools and of attempts to change traditional ways. Afghans, moreover, disapprove of Soviet society as well as the Soviet presence.

An active insurgency and traditional Afghan opposition will probably hamper Sovietization over the long term, so that for many years Afghan submission to Soviet rule will have to be forced.

Moscow has shown no signs of growing impatient over the Sovietization of Afghanistan. In Kabul the temptation to become passive probably will increase as the younger generation grows up with an impression of regime pervasiveness, and some Afghans will support the regime to improve their livelihoods and gain privileges. Outside Kabul, the Soviets will continue to pursue programs to make cooperation with Kabul appear attractive, and propaganda will continue to remind Afghans of the benefits of complying with the regime.

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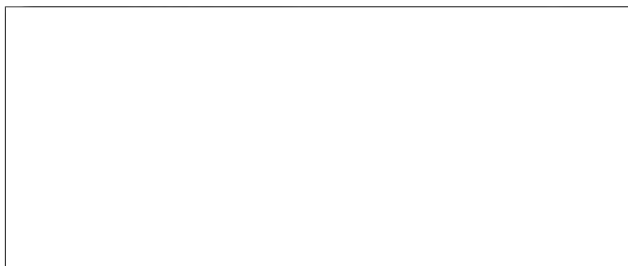
Afghanistan: Resisting Sovietization

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The Soviet program of transforming Afghanistan into a stable Communist client state has made little progress in the five years since the Soviet invasion. Despite Soviet dominance over the Afghan regime, the populace shows outward compliance only in areas where the Soviet presence is strong.¹ The Sovietization program for Afghanistan involves intimidating and indoctrinating the Afghan people and gradually transforming Afghanistan's economic, political, and social life to conform to the Soviet model. At their current rate of gaining adherents to the regime, the Afghan Communists will need decades before they can rule without a large Soviet military presence. [REDACTED]

Soviet achievements in absorbing Central Asia and controlling Mongolia and Eastern Europe, in our view, do not assure success in Afghanistan, though the Soviets believe they will ultimately prevail. Afghans have historically resisted foreign domination and control by any central government; Afghanistan's mountainous terrain is especially suited to guerrilla warfare; its nonindustrial, subsistence economy does not readily permit the Soviets to intimidate the labor force; and—most important—the Afghan resistance receives substantial foreign military and political support. [REDACTED]

Apart from Kabul, Communist influence has probably declined since the Soviet invasion. Our analysis of government control of Afghanistan's population, based on reports of military operations and population movements, indicates that, of a population of about 14 million, no more than 5.6 million, or 40 percent, live in government-held areas. This is a substantial decline since 1980 when an estimated 7.6 million people, 51 percent of the then total of 15 million, lived in government-held areas. [REDACTED]



Plans and Realities

The Communists' plans to win support and advance Marxist doctrine have been extensive but generally unimplemented. According to an Afghan party document, a program for expanding regime influence involves securing districts that are politically and economically important so that state workers can safely pursue converting the local populace, inducing local leaders to support the regime, and recruiting youth for regime service, particularly in KHAD, the Afghan intelligence organization. The document posits a combination of force, subversion, and bribery; backing only those whose influence is well established; and concentrating on strategically important areas. Soviet control of the policymaking apparatus of the Afghan regime has not assured control of the civil servants or policy implementation. [REDACTED] able sources, Soviet advisers in the Afghan Government find that their plans and orders are often sabotaged or frustrated. [REDACTED]

The Afghan Communists have attempted to implement several reforms to expand the influence of the central government and promote Marxist goals. One reform—designed to end perpetual debt of small landholders and landless peasants—limited or canceled loan repayments and returned land that moneylenders had seized. A second reform restricted payment to brides' families and curtailed other marriage-related expenses, set the minimum age for marriage at 16 for girls and 18 for boys, and made consent mandatory for both bride and groom. This reform was designed to restructure economic relationships and limit familial control, thus making the younger generation more susceptible to regime authority. Plans for other reforms often mentioned in the Kabul media concern land redistribution, government control of irrigation systems, government grants of seed and fertilizer, the eradication of illiteracy, revision of the school curriculum to reflect Marxist objectives, and revision of the judicial system to mirror that of the USSR. [REDACTED]

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Factory workers in the Afghan-Soviet Friendship Hall [redacted]



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Attempts by the Taraki and Amin regimes to implement the reforms were ham-handed and left such bitterness that the Babrak regime has only paid lipservice to their implementation. [redacted]

[redacted] Mullahs told the peasants that cancellation of debts was against tribal codes and amounted to theft, as did acceptance of confiscated land. Marriage reforms were also condemned as un-Islamic, and young women felt insulted by limited bride prices, [redacted]

[redacted] The old ruling classes strongly opposed policies that undermined their financial control and social status. The government could not protect its workers from attacks and intimidation, and the regime did not have enough personnel to maintain a long-term presence in each village. [redacted]

[redacted] the government reacted to the resistance by arresting and executing many religious figures. As a result, the regime appeared even more anti-Islamic and generated greater hostility among the people. [redacted]

The Kabul regime is aware that its measures to implement Marxist reforms have been inadequate. In early 1983 an Afghan party document concluded that the central administration could not support its agents in the field and that party and state officials lacked

knowledge of local situations. The document charged party officials with laxness in spreading propaganda, showing poor judgment in using local resources to improve the lot of the people, and failing to coordinate activities. The document also noted abortive attempts to buy the loyalty of local insurgent groups—attempts that have sometimes resulted in the slaying of regime representatives. [redacted]

In our view, even where the Soviet presence has been strong, the ruling party has produced only a small class of privilege-seekers. According to US Embassy reports, the gulf between the party and the people is wide and growing. In Kabul, the regime's privileged class has burgeoned since the Soviet invasion. The younger, lower-ranking members of the new class wear Western dress and loiter in the streets, according to US Embassy reports. Party members frequent the best restaurants, where they use alcohol and consort with prostitutes. The consequences are further alienation of the people from the rulers. [redacted]

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Offices of Central Committee
of the People's Democratic
Party of Afghanistan [redacted]



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The Babrak regime has been unsuccessful in gaining legitimacy by portraying itself as Islamic and egalitarian. [redacted] Afghans easily see through such measures as changing the flag to include Islamic green, forming a Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, publicizing regime support for mosques and Islamic shrines and institutions, and invoking the name of Allah at all official functions. According to US Embassy reports, insurgents still consider the regime anti-Islamic and frequently attempt to assassinate regime-backed mullahs. With considerable success, guerrillas call on Afghan soldiers to desert and join in the "holy war" against the Soviets. [redacted]

Indoctrination efforts depend mainly on the National Fatherland Front, Afghan and Soviet media, and the Afghan and Soviet education systems. [redacted]

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The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the primary tool for Communist reform, has been unsuccessful in significantly augmenting its numbers or in reducing the bloody factionalism that hampers its operation. Factional purges, desertions, assassinations, and intimidation by insurgents have kept party membership limited. [redacted]

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[redacted] we estimate that party membership is less than one-third of the regime's public claim of 120,000. Struggles between the Parchami faction (an estimated 40 percent of the members) and the Khalqi faction (an estimated 60 percent) have produced armed clashes, low morale, desertions from the armed forces, and collaboration with the insurgents. The Soviet Ambassador has often had to mediate in party disputes [redacted] and unity has remained elusive despite Soviet attempts to deal evenhandedly with the factions. Moscow has permitted the

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The Means for Sovietization

We believe Sovietization has failed to produce loyal followers of the regime because the program itself is inadequate and is executed without dedicated personnel. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, guided by Soviet advisers, oversees the implementation of Marxist policies and the efforts to develop a loyal following for the Kabul regime. In some areas the party uses the Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs along with KHAD to spread propaganda and subversion, often through offers of money.

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Soviet Control: Domination and Frustration**The Afghan Government and Military**

Soviet advisers and technicians oversee all aspects of Afghan Government policy. []

[] the main purpose of those advisers who are not concerned with combating the resistance or consolidating Soviet control is to ensure that production goals are met. We believe that the greatest concentrations of Soviet advisers are in the Ministries of National Defense and Foreign Affairs and in KHAD, the Afghan intelligence service. []

Kabul's foreign policy slavishly follows the Soviet line. Soviet advisers in the Foreign Ministry, acting on instructions from Moscow, have more authority than their counterparts in other ministries. []

The Defense Ministry is also permeated with Soviet advisers. [] Soviet advisers attached to Afghan units control the units' administrative and operational activities. The advisers make all decisions concerning operations, organization, promotions, and transfers of officers. []

The Interior Ministry has a similarly heavy complement of Soviet advisers. []

ruling Parchami faction to increase its power gradually, but the Soviets have had little choice but to allow the Khalqi faction to maintain its influence in the Army and an independent military force in the provincial police command. [] The Soviets have removed the most uncompromising factional leaders from the Afghan scene for long periods—through ambassadorial assignments or “training” in the USSR. []

[] advisers oversee the implementation of Soviet policies, maintain close liaison with Interior Minister Gulabzoi, and educate young Afghans in Marxist-Leninist doctrine. [] Khalqis in the Interior Ministry are often responsible for attacks on the ruling Parchamis. []

The Economy

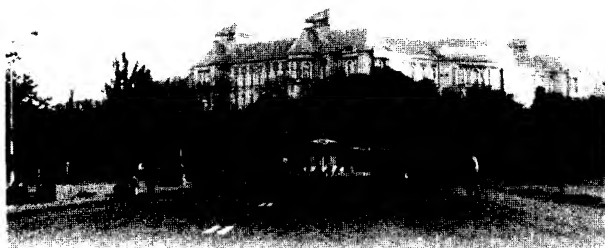
The Soviets control key sectors of Afghanistan's national economy but have made no attempt to socialize local economic systems. Since the invasion in 1979, Moscow has largely replaced Western lenders and donors in Afghanistan, providing about \$850 million in economic assistance as grants and about \$50 million in development assistance. Western aid, meanwhile, has declined from some \$100 million annually to almost nothing. Since 1975 the Soviets have provided credits, equipment, and technical assistance to develop Afghan industry. The Soviets import about 95 percent of Afghanistan's gas production, which we estimate was 2.7 billion cubic meters in 1983. Press reports indicate that the Soviets over the years have consistently paid less than the world price for gas, and Afghan officials say the Soviets have not permitted Afghans to check on how much gas is being pumped. []

The long-term prospect is for the Afghan economy to be absorbed into the Soviet economy. Afghanistan will probably be subsidized in the way that poorer parts of the USSR are and Mongolia was during long periods of its Sovietization. []

Moscow probably hopes that a new generation entering the party will give its loyalty to leaders free of factional enmity. So far, however, there is little sign of emergence of such leadership. Both factions have sought to recruit new party members, depending upon the ethnic, tribal, and clan connections that distinguish Afghan politics. []

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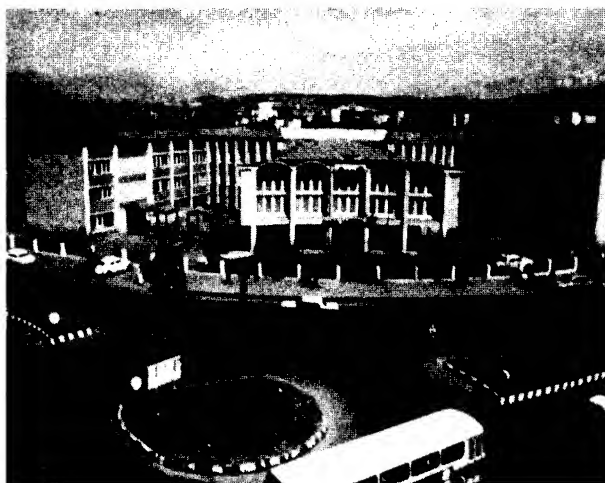


Afghan Ministry of National Defense

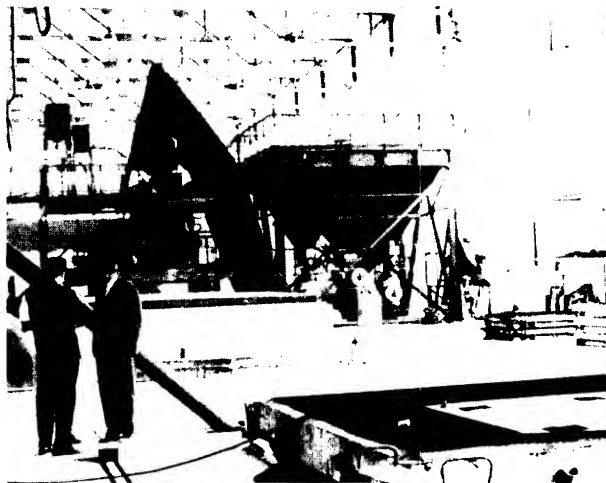


Afghan Ministry of Finance

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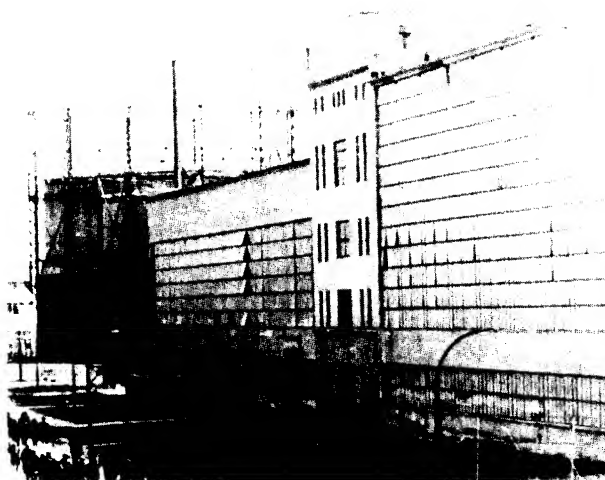


Kabul municipal building

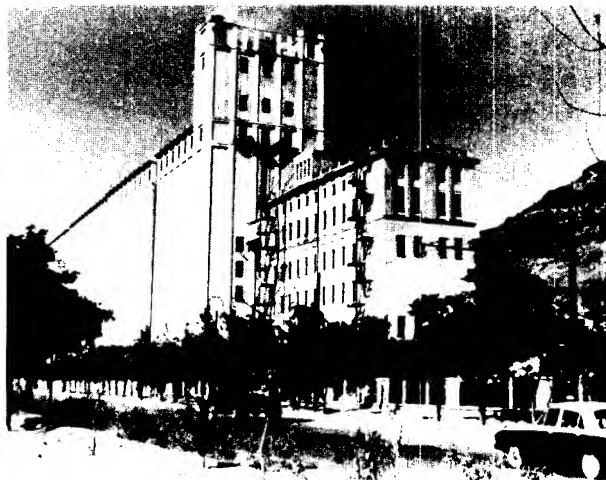


Kabul prefabrication plant built with Soviet assistance

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Nitrogenous fertilizer plant in Mazar-e Sharif, built with Soviet aid in 1974



Kabul grain silo and bakery, built with Soviet aid

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Afghan officials said in late 1983 that elections would be held during 1984 for village, subdistrict, and province councils, and that later a "national council" would be chosen to replace the Revolutionary Council, Afghanistan's nominal governing body since 1978. Prime Minister Keshtmand subsequently said the PDPA would be the leading party in the elections. These statements indicate plans to duplicate the Soviet system of centralized party control behind a democratic facade. Since January 1984, however, public mention of the plans has been rare, possibly because of difficulties in reaching more than a small portion of the potential electorate. []

KHAD and the Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs

Chief among the party's instruments for propaganda and subversion are KHAD and the Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs, but their efforts to win tribal support have yielded few results. Large sums of money have usually bought local loyalties for no more than a few months. []

[] KHAD and the Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs in spring 1984 were distributing thousands of pamphlets and large numbers of cassettes of speeches among tribesmen, particularly in the eastern border provinces. The propaganda alleges that many benefits arose from the 1978 revolution, associates a feudal society with the insurgency, claims that insurgent leaders live in luxury in Peshawar, asserts that the refugees support a lost and unpopular cause, and charges that the insurgents kill innocent Afghan civilians and destroy their property. [] the propaganda is usually ignored, even when accompanied by the provision of food and medical care. []

[] the government's political action program is rudimentary and inept. At a village in Balkh Province in winter 1983-84, for example, government spokesmen promised villagers weapons, clothes, and wheat. Only the weapons were delivered, and the regime officials lost interest in political programs once the Soviets completed repairs on an area road. [] any political benefits that may have resulted were destroyed after regime soldiers appropriated food from the villagers and Soviet soldiers shot several farmers, assuming they were insurgents. []

The National Fatherland Front

Regime-sponsored groups under the umbrella National Fatherland Front claim national following and promote party goals, but we believe the groups have little substance outside Kabul and are generally ineffectual. The Front claims to "activate the people toward economic and social progress," according to press reports. Encompassed in the Front are the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan (DYOA), the Democratic Women's Organization of Afghanistan, trade unions, and associations for writers, artists, and other groups. []

The Front, led by PDPA Politburo member Saleh Muhammad Ziray, numbers only a few thousand members, nearly all in Kabul. [] the programs to promote Soviet art and culture, present Marxist-Leninist themes, and portray Soviet history and Afghan party achievements are not popular because of the political themes and fear of reprisal by insurgents. We believe that most Front organizations do little more than issue statements supporting regime policies. []

The youth organization is more aggressive but not notably more effective than the other Front groups. Patterned after the Soviet Komsomol, the DYOA seeks recruits for local militias and channels recruits into indoctrination programs. [] the youth organization also tries to reinforce discipline and propagate Communist ideology in the Afghan military. US Embassy sources indicate that the regime recently ordered schoolteachers to recruit new DYOA members. A student's refusal to join results in loss of education privileges. []

A countereffort by the resistance inhibits participation in the DYOA. [] senior regime officials grew concerned that insurgent organizations in Kabul in spring 1984 were vigorously recruiting Afghan youth. In the short term, Afghan and Soviet efforts to indoctrinate Afghan

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Antiregime and Western Media

Antiregime broadcasts, in our view, may boost insurgent morale but play only a minor role in countering Soviet and regime propaganda. Three clandestine radio stations broadcast criticism of Soviet and Afghan regime policy. [redacted] insurgents who hear the broadcasts show great pride in having their own radio station. Two of the stations broadcast from insurgent strongholds within Afghanistan, and the third apparently broadcasts from Mashhad, Iran. [redacted]

Cassette recordings are probably more effective than the clandestine broadcasts. [redacted] tapes distributed by Panjsher insurgents are popular, though scarce. The tapes—designed to encourage other insurgents—present music, Afghan poetry, and commentaries on fighting. Cassettes from personally identified sources are akin to Afghans' traditionally accepted medium for news: rumors passed orally [redacted]

The impact of resistance publications, like that of the Communist press, is limited by widespread illiteracy. Insurgent organizations in Peshawar maintain several publications, [redacted] some of which may be smuggled into Afghanistan. In our

view, most of them exaggerate claims of insurgent successes. Given the low rate of literacy along with the danger to anyone observed by the regime in possession of an insurgent publication, we doubt that such publications are extensive or effective. [redacted]

The effect of Western broadcasts is limited by reception problems, lack of interest, and ignorance of world affairs. US Embassy reports indicate that Voice of America and Radio Liberty are sometimes jammed, fully or partially. Although Radio Pakistan, Voice of America, and BBC have local audiences, listeners generally find the programs too short and thus seldom tune in. [redacted]

Moreover, Afghans have no interest in Western radios' extensive reporting on international sports. Although they enjoy news of anti-Communist groups and personalities, such news is poorly understood. [redacted] the East-West conflict is seen as a struggle between Soviet atheism and religious faith. Polish opposition leader Lech Walesa and Solidarity are seen as "Catholic mujahedin." [redacted]

youth probably succeed only when the parents have influenced the children to accept Communism or when the children have long been isolated from their families and villages, perhaps raised in a regime orphanage. [redacted]

The Media

We believe Soviet efforts to use the media for indoctrination have failed because of the Afghans' cynicism and ignorance of international issues. Antiregime and Western media also contribute to that failure, though only in small measure. [redacted]

Communist Control, Goals. Since their invasion in December 1979, the Soviets have created a smaller version of their propaganda apparatus for the Afghans. [redacted]

Soviet advisers control all Kabul radio and television broadcasts and write scripts promoting socialism and criticizing US policy. The Soviets exert similar control over Afghan publications, many of which did not exist prior to the Soviet intervention. [redacted]

Kabul Broadcasts. Kabul broadcasts reach a wide audience, [redacted] yet have little effect on popular opinion. Radios are widely available, and in the countryside, [redacted] Kabul radio is popular because of its Afghan music and continual service, but its propaganda elicits derision. Most of the radio and television programs

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Offices and studio, Radio
Afghanistan [redacted]



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purvey political, social, and economic themes that even the urban audiences consider irrelevant. US Embassy sources indicate that Kabul citizens find most international news meaningless. A marcher in the Kabul demonstration on 25 December 1983 protesting the US intervention in Grenada confessed to having no idea where or what Grenada was. US Embassy reports indicate that on issues of public interest—such as military service and the resistance—most listeners reject the regime line out of hand. [redacted]

Kabul Press. We believe the Afghan press has little influence on Afghan society because its audience is limited and lacks interest. Kabul newspapers are modeled on Moscow's. Because the national literacy rate is below 10 percent—though it may be 20 percent in Kabul—the press reaches only a small portion of the populace. [redacted] US Embassy reports indicate the vast majority of literate Afghans ignore the press. In early 1984, after several months of walking about the capital, an Embassy officer reported not having seen a single Afghan buying, reading, or even carrying a newspaper. Despite a population of some 1.7 million, Kabul apparently has only two newspaper kiosks, both with old newspapers for sale, and newspaper display stands—so prevalent in the USSR—apparently do not exist in Kabul. [redacted]

Kabul's Press: In the Soviet Image

According to US Embassy reports, the Kabul press is patterned after the Soviet press, with three major dailies serving supposedly as organs of various regime institutions. The Truth of the April Revolution is, like Pravda, the organ of the party Central Committee. Homeland is Kabul's Izvestiya, the organ of the Revolutionary Council, which, in turn, is meant to resemble the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers. Friend serves as the organ of the National Fatherland Front, which supposedly represents all Afghan nationalities and social groups. The three major dailies are basically compilations of regime slogans arranged to fit the occasion. More doctrinaire than Soviet newspapers, the Afghan papers generally lack the frank or offbeat articles that occasionally appear in the Moscow press. Articles critical of economic mismanagement or other faults on the part of lower ranking officials are rare in the Kabul papers, where all problems are attributed to "imperialists" and antirevolutionary elements. [redacted]

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Soviet bookstore, Kabul



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The book trade has little effect in Afghan society, apart from its role in supplying schools. US Embassy sources indicate that Soviet-published books dominate the juvenile market and are also prevalent in Kabul's used book outlets. The high proportion of new Soviet books appearing in the used book market suggests the regime may be supplying them directly to dealers in an attempt to increase distribution.

official quotes the Tashkent press as stressing the need "to tell our Uzbek brothers in Afghanistan about the great progress we have made under Communism in Central Asia." Another theme centers on the need "to extend help to our backward brothers in Afghanistan to enrich and develop their primitive literature and culture." Most of the propaganda, according to the source, is aimed at Afghan youth.

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Soviet Media. In our view, the cynicism and illiteracy of the Afghans render Soviet media at least as ineffective as Afghan media in shaping public opinion. Moscow radiobroadcasts in Dari, Tajik, and Pashtu, along with Soviet television, are heard clearly in Kabul. Soviet media regularly stress that the Afghan revolution is irreversible and portray the Afghan people as busily engaged—with Soviet assistance—in consolidating the gains of the April 1978 revolution under the leadership of the Afghan party.

Education

We believe the Afghan and Soviet education systems so far have had little impact on the Afghans' political attitudes. In addition to sending thousands of Afghans to the USSR annually, the Soviets have reshaped Afghanistan's education system into a mechanism to indoctrinate and to reward party and military service. Although the Soviets have radically altered the Afghan curriculum to promote indoctrination, Afghanistan's school system has only limited influence since it has ceased functioning everywhere but in a few major cities.

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According to a former Afghan education official, a steady flow of Soviet propaganda comes from translating centers like Tashkent to remind Afghans of their ethnic and cultural ties to the USSR. The

The Afghan Curriculum

Most of the Soviet-prompted curriculum changes are designed to promote Communist ideology.

traditional disciplines are largely neglected. In the elementary and secondary schools, the curriculum developed by Columbia University was replaced with the Soviet curriculum in winter 1979 and reduced from 12 years to 10. Afghan textbooks are published in Tashkent, and course content stresses the merits of Communism. Some books are only slightly modified versions of Soviet texts, with praise of Babrak substituted for praise of Lenin. In the first grade, the first lesson concerns the April revolution. Marxism-Leninism is introduced in the second grade. According to US Embassy reports, a Ministry of Education document prescribes that children in the seventh grade study "Socialism, the Dream of the World's Working Class," "The Struggle of the Two World Systems," and "The Three Principal Forces of the Revolution." These subjects are also taught in the higher grades, along with others concerning the party, the April 1978 revolution, and aid from the "fraternal" USSR. Socialist indoctrination appears to have replaced religion in the public system, but mosque schools still function, when local conditions permit, in both government- and insurgent-controlled areas.

Kabul University's curriculum has also undergone changes. In May 1978 required courses were introduced concerning Marxist-Leninist theories of economics, history, and sociology. Russian language also became mandatory, replacing English as the required foreign language. The world literature course deals only with Marxist authors, and Afghanistan's history has been rewritten to emphasize Soviet aid and Western colonialism. US Embassy sources indicate that the social science texts at Kabul University are sophisticated rehashes of party formulas carried regularly in the regime press. Progovernment clergy are trained both at the university and in the USSR.

By mid-1983, the number of elementary and secondary schools had dropped from 2,700 to 50. At Kabul University—the only major university in the country—enrollment dropped from 14,000 in 1978 to 6,000 in 1983, according to a former Afghan professor, the other postsecondary institution, Nangarhar University in Jalalabad, was attended by only about 30 women in autumn 1983. Prior to the Communist takeover, enrollment was about 400. Before 1980, as is common in male-dominated Muslim societies, men comprised most of the student body. Now most of the students are women. Most eligible men have fled the country, joined the resistance, or been conscripted, and the few remaining male students are members of KHAD or the ruling party.

As part of its propaganda effort, the regime has introduced widely publicized literacy courses in Kabul and claims tens of thousands have been graduated. the courses are almost wholly political and indicates that only some 2,000 persons have attended them, mostly women and elderly civil servants.

The barrage of anti-US propaganda in the schools has had little impact so far on any age group, according to US Embassy reports. In summer 1984, Kabul schoolchildren formed a chattering, enthusiastic escort for a strolling US official when they discovered his nationality. The official reports finding similar friendliness among Afghan youth in the Kabul bazaar. A Western journalist in summer 1984 also reported that the Kabul man in the street still seems delighted to talk to Americans.

Patronage and Rewards. We believe that the university is used mainly to reward military service and party work. As of fall 1983, men have not been admitted to Kabul University unless they have completed three years of military or police service, Party members, are admitted to the university

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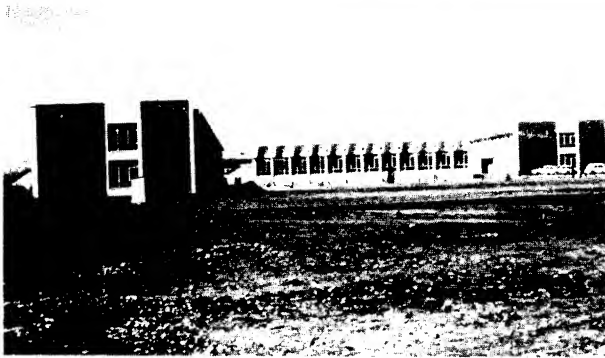
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*View of Kabul. University
lower left* [redacted]



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University of Kabul, Letters and Humanities College [redacted]



Kabul Polytechnic, built in 1972 with Soviet aid [redacted]



University of Kabul, Physics and Science College [redacted]

without having to take the required entrance examination. Since 1981 the regime has not given anyone a diploma for secondary or university studies until completion of military service. [redacted]

[redacted] since 1981, students—even those in medical training—have been promoted on the basis of party work rather than academic achievement. [redacted]

the caliber of students deteriorated markedly after the Communist takeover because admission examinations to Kabul University have been waived for students who enter the Army upon graduation from secondary school. [redacted]

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Soviet instructors and students at Kabul Polytechnic

Afghan Students in the USSR. In our judgment, extensive Soviet programs to train and indoctrinate Afghans in the USSR have produced limited and sometimes counterproductive results.

we estimate that some 8,000 Afghans, including some 2,000 military personnel, annually attend Soviet institutions for training and education. According to Kabul press reports in January 1984, Afghan students in the USSR were attending 66 educational institutions at 24 different locations.

each year several hundred Afghan youth visit Young Pioneer counterparts in the USSR. included in those receiving political training in the USSR are Khalqis, Parchamis, nonparty officials, middle-level government officials, schoolteachers and administrators, and foreign trade officials.

some are there on scholarships offered as bribes, and others are there to avoid conscription into the Afghan military.

Afghans returning from the USSR have acquired technical, operational, or administrative skills but continue to lack political sophistication or ideological commitment. Many of the Afghans return hostile or indifferent toward the Soviets and their political system.

Afghans trained in the USSR usually maintain the same views and orientation after a stay in the USSR as they had beforehand.

Moreover, many returnees probably are not assigned appropriate or attractive positions that would extend Communist influence, in part because the regime lacks control of the countryside. The US Embassy in Kabul in summer 1984 reported that some Afghan youths who had studied in the USSR had returned politically indifferent. Some were working as clerks selling Japanese stereo systems. Others had been assigned undesirable tasks or work outside Kabul but chose to remain in the capital unemployed.

many Afghans resent the Soviets because of the hostility that Soviet citizens in Moscow and other cities show them.

in summer 1983 Afghan students returning from the USSR spoke of strained relations with their Soviet counterparts. In June 1984,

Afghan officials privately expressed concern over problems that Afghan students had in the USSR. The Soviets blamed the Afghans for Soviet military casualties and accused the students of being involved in smuggling and black marketing. The Afghan students complained that they were not trusted and that their movements were restricted.

Similar problems affect Afghan military trainees in the USSR. Afghan military students often return from the USSR with anti-Soviet attitudes despite the attempts at political indoctrination. The Afghans complain of unsatisfactory living conditions, low stipends, and harassment by local citizens.

Sociological Factors Hampering Sovietization

Along with a history of resistance to foreign domination and central government control, obstacles to Sovietization include the Afghans' traditional distrust of government schools and attempts to change traditional ways. Most Afghans also harbor a special dislike for Soviet society and the Soviet presence.

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Distrust of Government Schools

In our view, the regime's use of schools to propagate Communist ideology has reinforced the Afghans' traditional distrust of the government, particularly in rural areas. [redacted] rural Afghans believe government teachers—usually outsiders from cities and larger towns—corrupt the young, especially girls, by teaching concepts contrary to local tradition. Rural Afghans also question the value of formal education for children destined to be herdsmen and subsistence farmers. [redacted] the peasants believe educated people become Communists and fear the schools for that reason as well. [redacted]

Resistance to Change

We believe Afghans' traditional resistance to change is a serious impediment to Sovietization. A measure of the rural Afghans' resistance to outside views is that, [redacted] the most openminded of them consider highly conservative Iran an advanced society. In Kabul the reluctance to change is evident even among those who sympathize with or passively accept the Soviet presence. [redacted]

[redacted] in spring 1983 many Afghan civil servants' reaction to Soviet advisers was generally subdued and passive, though many resented the Soviets' treating them "like children." [redacted]

[redacted] Soviet advisers' complaints about Afghan officials' lack of cooperation are common [redacted]

[redacted]

Distaste for Soviet Society

We believe that Afghans' impressions of Soviet society, though often unrealistic, are overwhelmingly negative. [redacted]

[redacted] Afghans have a common impression of Soviet society from their observations of Soviet troops. Insurgents hold the Soviets in low esteem because they lack a sacred scripture, they are not

fighting for a faith, and their way of life is anti-Islamic. Afghans believe that Soviet atheism promotes use of alcohol, often to excess, and is destructive to family life. The concept of sexual equality promoted in Soviet and regime media and the perception of Soviet women working outside the home are considered evil. Another common theme in insurgent impressions of Soviet society is that children in the USSR are removed from their families and raised in government institutions. [redacted] Soviet propaganda has not dispelled these impressions, which have given the Afghan peasantry a unique interpretation of Communist propaganda. [redacted]

[redacted] "democratic" and "socialist" have strongly negative connotations, and Afghans happily admit that their friends are the "imperialist" states. [redacted] Afghans believe that, if the Soviets triumph, Afghans will be unable to practice their religion, their women will work outside the home, and their land will be taken away. [redacted]

We believe that many regime loyalists resent the Soviet presence. [redacted] a senior Afghan party official in January 1984 commented that the party was tired of the Soviets' bad behavior. He complained of looting during searches of houses and of the Soviets' patronizing, disrespectful attitudes toward Afghan soldiers. In autumn 1983, [redacted] most Afghans, including civilians and party members, resented the Soviets, who held all positions of authority and made decisions affecting Afghans without consulting their Afghan counterparts. [redacted] cials were chafing at the situation, [redacted]

Outlook and Implications

Despite the lack of progress so far, the Soviets will continue to pursue a variety of indoctrination programs as part of their long-term effort to consolidate Communist control in Afghanistan, building a loyal cadre of Afghans who may someday administer an effective pro-Soviet government. [redacted]

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It will be years before the Sovietization process will have much impact:

- The programs cannot be pursued effectively so long as the government has little presence outside Kabul.
- The presence of Soviet troops will continue to cause the Afghans to view the Kabul regime as a foreign puppet.
- The Soviet presence cannot be reduced until the Afghan Army can assume the major burden of the fighting, not likely for years into the future. []

While building cadre and trying out new programs, the task of maintaining a minimum base of government authority will continue to fall to Soviet troops and their small number of Afghan military allies. Moscow will maintain at least enough troops in Afghanistan to protect its puppet government and launch spoiling attacks against insurgent bases and bands. Soviet leaders clearly hope that this military effort will entail only a low cost while they wait for the initial Sovietization efforts to bear fruit. []

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With continued foreign support, the insurgency may remain active for decades, continuing to delay and restrict the Sovietization process. Insurgent morale has remained high over the past five years. []

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[] when evidence of war weariness appears among insurgents, it leads to thoughts of emigration rather than to acquiescence to the Kabul regime. Moreover, traditional Afghan resistance to the Soviets and to any central government may prove insuperable. The indoctrination programs and propaganda are not likely to win the minds of most Afghans young or old. []

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But the Soviets probably already calculate that the Sovietization process will take decades. Their experiences in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Mongolia undoubtedly give them reason to hope that they can attract and train a core of opportunists and ideologues willing to do their bidding. In Kabul the temptation to become passive and accept the Communist authorities will probably increase as the younger generation grows up with an impression of regime pervasiveness. Some will continue to join the ruling party to improve their livelihoods and gain privileges. []

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Outside Kabul, the Soviets will pursue programs that test the popular mood, raise the cost of opposition, and make cooperation with Kabul more attractive. Economic and technical assistance programs might convince at least some to limit their support to the insurgents. Propaganda concerning social programs will continue to remind Afghans of the rewards of compliance with the regime. []

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